

What the reviews and reviewers are saying about *Such Sweet Thunder: Views on Black American Music*

“I truly enjoyed reading [Such Sweet Thunder] and was enthralled with its scope and depth. What is more impressive, unlike many book publications on black music and musicians, is the inclusion of noted artists and their perspectives along with scholars of certain areas of black music. Knowing how difficult photographs are hard to come by, the black and white photos vividly captured each high moment and powerful persona of each participant-artist over the twenty-five year span of the conference. Moreover, I am seriously thinking about including it as a primary reader for my survey classes in African American music. As such, I would highly recommend *Such Sweet Thunder* to anyone who wishes to grasp the true meaning and significance of black music in America and beyond.” **Dr. Cheryl L. Keyes** (Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology, University of California, Los Angeles)

“In explaining why I think *Such Sweet Thunder* is an essential exposition of the evolution of black American music, I realized my role in the on-going sequences in the history of black American music. In reflecting on my role, my first recollection goes back to 1950, in Detroit, Michigan when I was a member of Mack McCrayry’s house band at Sonny Wilson’s Forest Club. For two weeks of that year in January the band accompanied the renowned blues singer/guitarist T. Bone Walker, who brought with him his protégé – Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown. Being a participant observer of their musical creativity during those two weeks left lasting impressions on me.

After reading this publication, I realized that over twenty other musicians, both instrumentalist and vocalist were showcased, whom I personally have been musically involved with at some time during the past – going back to high school in 1939, where I first met Milt Jackson. I have been inspired and enlightened by this book, which comes as a welcome and valuable adjunct to the expanding archive of literature concerned with black American music. I think we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr. Frederick C. Tillis and Mark Baszak for bringing this book into being.” **Dr. Yusef Lateef** (composer/multi-instrumentalist)

“*Such Sweet Thunder* is a triumph, and Baszak and Cohen are both to be congratulated... please know how much I’m enjoying this treasure trove of information.” **Jean Bach** (Academy Award-nominated director of the film, *A Great Day in Harlem*)

“Wonderful title! You all did a splendid job – it really is gorgeous. You can see it’s a labor of love and devotion, and that it captures the heart and spirit of the conferences. Know that the work you’ve done is truly seen and valued by some of us, especially those of us who know what it’s like to go against the current. Stay strong and savor your wonderful accomplishment.”

Roberta Uno (Editor, *The Color of Theater: Race, Culture, and Contemporary Performance*; Arts & Culture Program Officer, Ford Foundation, and former artistic director, New WORLD Theater)

“Thank you for sending me *Such Sweet Thunder*... You have produced a handsome and informative book... I have long considered jazz and film to be our nations’ most unique contributions to international art.” **Dan Gioia** (Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts)

“Featuring transcripts of talks and panel discussions, along with Edward Cohen’s evocative black-and-white photos of innovators like Art Blakey, Betty Carter, Ella Fitzgerald, Max Roach and Sarah Vaughan, this book offers a compelling oral history of a most noteworthy event... *Such Sweet Thunder* reveals how the festival served as a vital gathering place for artists and educators of all stripes... Many of the lectures collected in *Such Sweet Thunder* explore how music has been a “soundtrack of survival” in African American culture – as well as an engine of political subversion. Year after year, it served as a forum for the kinds of discussions that don’t take place often enough in this country... Columbia University professor Phyl Garland offers incisive commentary on vocal jazz innovators Eddie Jefferson and Jon Hendricks; jazz critic Peter Watrous probes the tension between avant-garde jazz musicians and tradition-minded artists like Wynton Marsalis; UMass music professor and nationally renowned educator Billy Taylor explores the rise of bebop. *Such Sweet Thunder* closes with a lively exchange between blues luminaries Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown and Luther “Guitar Junior” Johnson. Here, we get to move beyond theory as these storied musicians riff on everything from the commercialization of the blues to the violence of the hip-hop scene. This conversation is, without a doubt, the highlight of this handsome book.” **Amy Kroin** (Former Arts Editor, *The Valley Advocate*)

“Your organizational planning and follow-through for *Such Sweet Thunder* is amazing...the book is a killer!!” **Dr. Willie L. Hill Jr.** (Director of the Fine Arts Center, University of Massachusetts, Past President of (International Association of Jazz Educators) IAJE, and President of MENC)